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AUTHOR	Andrews, Suzanne; Gahris, Cynthia; Reeder, Marcia; Tizzano, Anthony
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ABSTRACT

This document, which is intended for parents of Ohio students in grade 8, explains the purpose and content of the Individual Career Plan (ICP) and provides activities through which parents can help their children begin to think about career choice. The document begins with an overview of the ICP, which is a scrapbook-like document that Ohio students in grades 8-12 use to record their ideas about career choice and keep records of all the career activities they do in school. The remainder of the document consists of activities designed to enable parents to help their children accomplish the following tasks: (1) assess their personal interests, strengths, skills, and work attitudes and begin the process of personal planning; (2) learn about their parents' career choices; (3) explore possible careers and determine whether those careers are a match for their skills and abilities; (4) choose career-relevant high school courses; (5) understand the different sections of the ICP; (6) complete the ICP's Career Planner and Educational Planner section; (7) complete the Career Skills Checklist; (8) complete the Career Skills Builder's work-based sections; and (9) understand how the skills identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills relate to school and work. (MN)

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ED 442 983

Career goals for my 8th grader? You've got to be kidding!

Ohio's Career Development Program

It's about time

The high school courses students select can determine earning power for the rest of their lives.

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Parental activities to help middle grade students begin to think about career choice.

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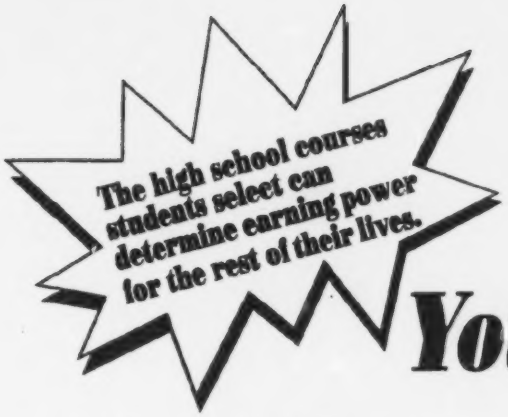

Career goals for my 8th grader?

You've got to be kidding!

When children are in middle school or junior high it is the time for them to begin to think about their own career goals. This may surprise you — especially if your middle grade child can't even make plans for the week-end. But career research tells us that the early teen years are when children begin to "try on" career possibilities. In fact, many young teens have a pretty clear idea of the career they'd like to enter first. And the course choices they make in high school can determine their earning power for the rest of their lives. But, the important thing is that they learn ***how*** to make career decisions – a skill they will need for life.

Since 1994, schools in Ohio have been helping middle grade and high school students with career choices through a document called an Individual Career Plan (ICP). Your children have already had many career activities. The ICP provides a place for students in grades 8-12 (and earlier in some schools) to start writing down their ideas about career choice, and to have a place to keep all of the career activities they do in school. Think of it as a career "scrapbook".

As parents or guardians, we want you to ask your school about your child's ICP. Ask to see it at conferences during the middle grades and during high school. Know that the purpose of the ICP isn't to force your child into a career choice. Instead, it's designed to help students collect as much information as they can about themselves so they can eventually make more thoughtful decisions.

On the following pages you will find discussion starters and activities that will help you be a part of this process with your young teen.

The first section talks about knowing yourself (personal planning), knowing your choices (career planning) and knowing how to get there (educational planning). The second section walks you through the ICP and gives you ideas to help your young teen with it.

Use the ideas in this packet that work best for you, and remember: it's about time spent talking with your child, it's about time exploring possibilities, and it's about time to get started.

How well do your young teens know themselves?

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Personal Planning Begin here!

Personal planning is the starting point in career development. It requires people to gain an understanding of what makes them who they are. Personal planning, as a part of the ICP process, provides your children the opportunity to learn and understand their interests, strengths, skills (including academic), work attitudes, and even areas that need to be developed.

If you ever heard anyone say, "I hate my job", that person is probably working in an occupation that doesn't match any one of his or her interests, strengths, skills, or work attitudes.

The more you know about yourself, the greater the opportunity for you to find a career path that fits.

Time for the facts:

Career development theory tells us that people have "internal job descriptions" that begin to develop at an early age. Our unique interests and abilities may change somewhat over time, but common themes can be discovered.

* Help your child collect information about individual interests and abilities. Provide as many experiences for them as you can so they can continue to discover what they do well and what they love to do. Don't be upset if some of their ideas seem unrealistic. These ideas can be used as clues to their interests and abilities.

The average person will work between 60,000 and 80,000 hours in a lifetime. Work that emphasizes your unique interests and abilities can be a joy.

* Guide, but don't decide initial career choices for your children. The ultimate decision is theirs. They alone will invest those 80,000 hours of their lives at work, so the choice must be based on their own interests and abilities.

Informal research indicates that about half of Ohio twelfth-grade students say their career goal has changed very little since eighth grade.

- Don't assume that your young teen doesn't have a clue about the future. Young teens are moving out of the career fantasy stage and into the career exploration stage, thinking about possible career choices. Often they have a clear idea about the work they would like to do.

Parents (or guardians) are the number one influence on children's career choices.

- Be a good role model in this area for your young teens. Share what you enjoy about work that you do. Watch how much you complain about work, particularly in front of your children. Give them as many experiences as possible and discuss a variety of job options as often as you can.

Use the discussion ideas below to support your young teens with their personal planning as part of the career development process.

- Share how your interests, strengths, skills, and work attitudes influenced your own career decision.
- Talk to your children about their personal interests, strengths, skills, and attitudes. How do their career goals match with these?
- Help your child see how he or she uses strengths and skills in completing school or household assignments.
- Ask your young teens to identify skills or academic strengths they need to improve in order to be successful in their potential career choices.
- As your young teen continues with the ICP in high school, discuss if personal interests, strengths, skills, and work attitudes have changed. Discuss if the changes make any difference in his or her career goal. Share how your own interests, strengths, skills, and attitudes changed over time.

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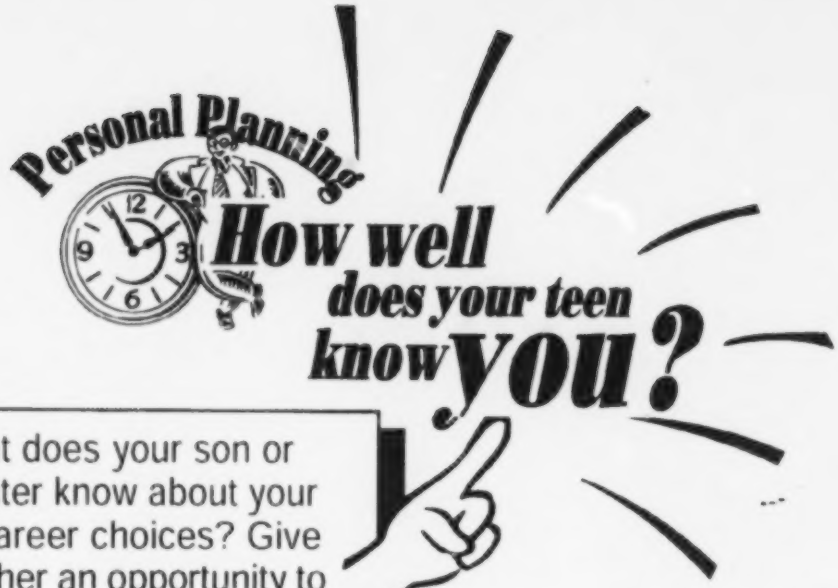

What does your son or daughter know about your own career choices? Give him or her an opportunity to ask you some questions. You might help by talking about the following.

1. My favorite subject in school was...

2. In my free time, I enjoyed...

3. I was particularly good at....

4. I didn't follow my career goal because...

(or, if you did follow your career goal, tell them about how you got there)

5. My parents wanted me to be a...

6. I got help in making my career decision from....

(or, if you didn't get help making your career decision, tell them how you got there)

7. If your career choices were limited because of your gender, talk to them about their perception of those career choices today. Do you think men and women entering the work force today have more choices?

8. The things I learned in school that have helped me the most are...

How much do your teens know about work?

Career Planning Main goal!

The main goal in the career planning phase of the ICP process is to provide your young teens with the opportunity to explore possible careers, to know what is required to be successful in the areas they explore, and to help them see if this career choice (or choices) will be a good match for their skills and abilities. Keep in mind they already probably have a pretty good idea of the career path of interest to them.

Time for the facts:

Careers in the health industry and the computer industry are among the fastest growing, both in Ohio and in the nation.

Knowing the outlook for jobs your young teen is considering is one more factor to think about. Even jobs that are fast-growing may still not employ a lot of people. This information is easily available through the Ohio Career Information System (OCIS: a computerized career information system available in your high school or public library), the Occupational Outlook Handbook (in your school or public library, or online at www.bls.gov/ocohome.htm), and through the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (online at http://lmi.state.oh.us).

Even with the growth in the health and computer industries, General Motors still, by far, is the largest private sector employer in Ohio employing approximately 63,200 people.

* It is important for young teens to begin to think about the places they might work, as they use their talents and abilities. Explore and discuss with your children, the different employers in your own community. Don't just consider large companies; 70 percent of all workers work for small business.

Use the discussion ideas below to support your young teens with their career planning.

- Share with your son or daughter the skills, physical demands, work setting, academic requirements, and wage or salary ranges for your own job.
- Ask your young teens to share how the physical demands, skills, work setting, academic requirements, and wage or salary range of their possible career paths fit with their own skills and abilities.
- Point out and discuss newspaper or magazine articles that show what the current employment outlook is like for your young teen's potential career.
- Take time, on a regular basis, to discuss with your young teen what he or she is doing to prepare for a possible career.
- Make arrangements with your employer during the summer months to allow your child to "shadow" you or other workers in a career of interest.
- Ask relatives and friends to make arrangements with their employers during the summer months for other job shadowing experiences for your young teen in a career of interest.
- Point out and discuss with your young teens the skills they use in school or household projects that relate to their possible career choices.
- Discuss how their experiences can be used in a resume, interview, or written work to show potential colleges or employers how they are preparing for their career choices.
- Encourage your son or daughter to explore a "Plan B" for a career choice in case "Plan A" doesn't work. (Always have a back-up plan!)

How are your teens choosing courses in high school?

Educational Planning Goal!

Once your teens have a fairly good understanding of their skills and abilities, and have some initial ideas about career choices, it is time for educational planning.

The goal of educational planning is for your young teen to know the educational requirements needed to be successful in the career of interest.

Research tells us that if the youth of today are going to be employable throughout life, they will have to be ready for continual education and lifelong learning. This is because the world of work is changing so rapidly.

As parents or guardians you play a critical role in supporting your children with their educational planning as part of the ICP process. This starts by being involved in the school your teen attends.

Time for *the facts:*

Fact!

Your young teen likely has many more educational choices in high school than you did.

- Talk to your school's counselor about the various options available. What kinds of vocational and technical choices are there? What career areas are available in Tech Prep in your school? Does your school have a Career Pathways program? Find out these answers with the counselor, a teacher, or an administrator in your school.

Recent statistics tell us that currently 14 percent of all jobs are available to high school dropouts; 35 percent of all jobs require a high school diploma; 27 percent of all jobs require some college (two-year or technical degree); and 24 percent of all jobs require a bachelor's degree or more.

* College is not a career goal, it is an educational path to reach a career goal. Don't assume that your teen can wait until college to decide on a career choice – the number one reason students drop out of college is lack of career focus. And, many people complete college and realize their career choice does not require a college degree.

The National Center for Educational Statistics reports that, nationally, 47 percent of students go on to college and only 24 percent graduate within six years.

* When you look at colleges with your child, ask about the school's retention rates. What percentage of freshman return after the first semester? Return as sophomores? Graduate after four years? After five years?

Use the discussion ideas below to support your young teens with their educational planning.

- Meet with your teachers and counselors on a regular basis each school year to monitor progress, and areas where your child might need help.
- Talk with your young teen about the best educational path to prepare for a career of interest. Is college, Tech Prep, vocational education, or a combination the best way to prepare? Help your teen investigate educational options when you meet with counselors and teachers.
- At conferences ask to see your young teen's ICP, in the eighth grade and into high school.
- Watch their school attendance and tardiness on a regular basis to ensure the development of a good work ethic and attitude.
- Encourage your teens to be involved in clubs or programs offered in the school that would help explore their career plans.
- Encourage them to take elective courses of interest.
- Encourage your teens to take part in special community summer programs or volunteer work that would support their educational and career plans
- Be aware of the academic courses that are most needed for your young teens' career choices. Talk to the teachers of these classes, or encourage your teen to talk to them about career opportunities.

What's in the ICP?

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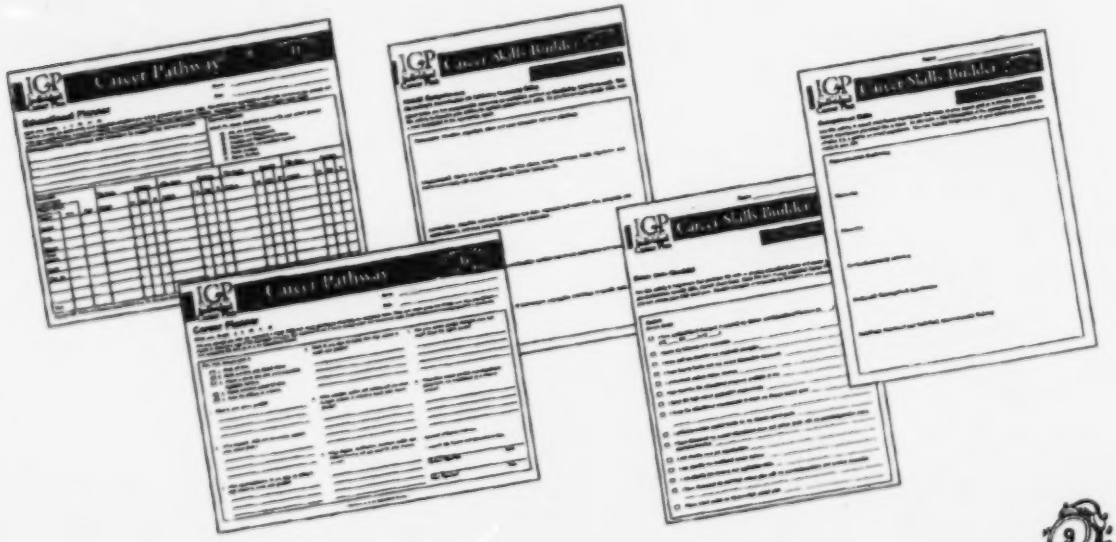
The actual ICP contains several sections. Your young teen will have a chance to begin each part before grade 9. Students will then be able to review and change each section at least once a year during high school. The ICP gives them a record of all the career ideas and activities they have had during high school.

On the following pages are activities that you, as parents or guardians, can do with your young teen. The activities will also help you understand the different sections of the ICP. These sections are listed below.

Career Pathway Section:	Career Planner Educational Planner
Career Skills Builder Section:	Career Skills Checklist Occupational Skills
SCANS Skills Section	

In addition, there is a ***Record of Assessments*** section in the ICP for students to complete as they take career interest and career aptitude assessments, Students also note when they have passed the ninth grade proficiency test.



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Career and Educational Planners

Your son or daughter will probably complete the Career Planner and Educational Planner sections of the ICP first. The Career Planner has a series of questions for your young teen to answer to help identify a career goal or goals. The Educational Planner provides a place for students to work on a schedule of high school classes to help reach their career goals. A counselor and/or teacher will also help with this.

You can help by talking to your teen about his or her skills,. interests, and work habits and attitudes. Remind your son or daughter to document these changing skills, interests, and work attitudes.

Ask your son or daughter to describe strengths in school. For example, if the goal is a career in the medical field, do they have good grades in math and science? Perhaps you can share an experience you may have had. For example, you may have had poor math skills but wanted a career in electronics so you got extra help in math to improve your grades and math understanding.

You and your children need to stay updated on the available career information resources, Do they know where to look for current information? Spend an hour or two in the local library, access career information software, go to the Internet for information, or use OCIS at school. Ask them if they know what high school courses and programs are available to them. See if they can tell you how those courses will support their career goals. Do they know what additional requirements may be needed? Do they understand labor market trends for their chosen careers? Are there local job opportunities for them? Do they have job-seeking and application skills?

Do some of the activities on the next page as a family to continue personal, career, and educational planning.

Develop a "Coat of Arms" for your family. A coat of arms is a banner, used over the years, to show family talents and strengths. Make a banner in the form of a shield. Ask each family member to describe personal talents and strengths, and draw illustrations of them. For example, if a family is talented musically and plays a musical instrument he or she could draw the instrument or musical notes on the shield. Put pictures of family members on the shield. Add other strengths (skills, academic talent and so on). To add variety and perhaps spark interest, ask each family member to create an individual coat of arms. (Personal planning)

Identify a "hall of fame" for your son or daughter. This can literally be a hallway or just a specified place in your home where information such as pictures and awards can be displayed. (Personal planning)

Even if you are all very busy, make time for at least one meal a month where you are all together and can share what is happening in terms of career goals and ideas. Has anyone learned a new skill? How and where was it learned and how can that skill be transferred to other learning experiences? Be sure to share your learning experiences as well. At first, it may be difficult for your children to recognize skills they are learning. Give them time and lots of examples. Watch them and make notes of the changes you have observed. (Career and educational planning)

Instead of the annual holiday newsletter, work together on an annual or semi-annual family career newsletter. Focus articles on individual careers, career goals, and work habits and attitudes learned from home chores, community work, or volunteerism, Write about new skills learned: new technology you have at work, school, or home; and how family members are learning the skills needed for this technology. (Career and educational planning)

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Career Skills Builders

Career Skills Checklist (School-Based Learning)

The Career Skills Checklist asks students to decide whether they have the skills needed to develop educational plans and career goals. They can update their answers each year. Skills include statements such as

> ***I know the high school graduation requirements.***
> ***I have discussed my current education plans and career goals with my parents/guardian and a counselor/teacher.***

To help your young teens with the Career Skills Checklist, you might start by telling them about your own career interests and any volunteer activities you have done.

Talk to them about your responsibilities at work now (whether you work as a homemaker or outside the home) and explain the kinds of decisions you make, how much you work with others, what skills and knowledge you use, other jobs you've had before and why you left them, and any future career goals you might have. If possible, arrange with work and school to take your teen to work with you for a job experience.

Be sure to ask them about their interests, skills, abilities, work attitudes, and goals. Start by making a confidential list of interests you believe your son or daughter has. While you're doing that, your child should also be making a confidential list. If he or she has trouble making a long list of personal interests, start with only three or four interests. You might want to give an example, "You ***spend a great deal of time on the computer creating graphics. Are you interested in computer design?"***

Share your lists and talk about the interests you've each written. Then make other lists with skills, abilities, work attitudes and goals. Try a variation of this activity by having your teen prepare a list of the skills (and abilities, work attitudes, goals) they believe <u>you</u> have while you prepare your own skill list.

These kinds of exchanges will help your teen make informed decisions by relating what is learned in school to personal career goals.

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Career Skills Builder

Occupational Skills

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning activities are those experiences that relate to a career goal such as job shadowing, internships, having a mentor, volunteer experience and paid work experiences. To help your son or daughter with the work-based parts of the Career Skills Builder, try some of the activities below.

Encourage your young teen to participate in volunteer activities in your community. Many of these opportunities are sponsored by clubs, health care agencies, organizations, and volunteer agencies. If you have been involved with any volunteer activities, share your experiences and talk about how your experiences impacted your work. It is possible that a volunteer opportunity may help your son or daughter decide about a career goal.

Find out if your children's school has a job shadowing and/or mentoring program. Help them get involved by volunteering to allow a student to job shadow at your place of work. Volunteer to mentor a student. Job shadowing is an excellent way to help clarify and define career goals. A mentor can help guide students in their exploration. Surveys of students tell us that they feel these activities have been the most helpful to them in making career choices.

Encourage your teen to work part-time. Help him or her find a part-time job by talking to co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family. Part-time jobs offer students an opportunity to explore career possibilities and discover the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes from work.

Learn together about vocational, Tech Prep, and college prep options. Explore apprenticeship and military options with your children. Using information you have already gathered about their interests, skills, and abilities, help them make a unique career plan that is a match for who they are.

Students who have been involved in career activities can relate what they have learned in school and in the community to career choices, make informed decisions and make more realistic choices. Now is the time to help them develop a plan.

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What are Scans Skills?

Another section of the ICP asks your young teens to describe a time they have used one of the SCANS skills. SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) is a national report that was done in 1991 and names the skills businesses (and colleges) want in applicants. These skills are listed below.

1. RESOURCES: **Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources.**

Being able to explain how to set goals, or prepare for a project. And, being able to identify and explain the possible

- materials,
- time,
- funds/money/budget,
- human resources,
- and steps needed to reach the goal or complete the project.

2. INTERPERSONAL: **Works with others.**

Being able to explain experiences of working with others as a member of a team; teaching others; being a team leader; negotiating conflicts; or working with a variety of different people with varyingbackgrounds.

3. **INFORMATION: Acquires and uses information.**

Being able to explain an experience of knowing who to speak with, or where to go to find information necessary to set and reach goals, or complete tasks or projects. Being able to describe how the information would be used.

4. SYSTEMS: **Understandscomplexinterrelationships.**

Being able to understand and explain the relationship of things and how they operate in relation to one another (An example would be a large organization, or school that has many departments). Being able to understand and explain how making suggestions or changes of policies or operations within the system might have either a positive or negative effect on the operation of the system or people within the system.

5. TECHNOLOGY: Works **with a variety of technology.**

Being able to understand, select, use, and explain the various types of technology (computers, the Internet, computer software programs, video or audio equipment, etc.) an individual would need to successfully complete presentations, tasks or projects.

Here are some suggestions to help you and your teen think about SCANS skills.

- How do you use the SCANS skills at home? Help your teens identify ways they use these skills.
- At conferences, ask teachers and counselors which SCANS skills they are helping your child develop.
- Talk about how your family is a system. This is usually one of the more difficult SCANS skills for a young teen to understand.
- Which SCANS skills are critical in your own work? Talk about which ones might be critical for the career goal your teen is thinking about now.

The activity below shows how work and school expectations are similar. It will help your teen make a better connection between school and work and will emphasize that work habits learned now will help later on the job.

Parents/Guardians		**Teens**	
What's expected at work?		What's expected at school (work)?	
Attendance	_____	Attendance	_____
Punctuality	_____	Punctuality	_____
Completing Assignments	_____	Completing Assignments	_____
Dependability	_____	Dependability	_____
Teamwork	_____	Teamwork	_____
Follow Through	_____	Follow Through	_____
Cooperation	_____	Cooperation	_____
Respect for Authority	_____	Respect for Authority	_____

What are the rewards for fulfilling your work and/or school responsibilities?

Activities in this packet were written by Suzanne Andrews, Penta County Career Development Program, Cynthia Gahris, Ohio Department of Education, Marcia Reeder, Mayfield Excel Career Development Program, and Anthony Tizzano, Cleveland Municipal Career Development Program.

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